



United States Attorney's Office  
District of Columbia

Channing Phillips  
Acting United States Attorney

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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **American Red Cross employee pleads guilty to defrauding agency of \$36,495 in travel claims**

WASHINGTON - A 45-year-old former employee of the American Red Cross, Mark Gibbons, has pled guilty to a charge of obtaining funds by fraud from a program receiving federal funds, for his involvement in a scheme in which he fraudulently claimed over a two-year period more than \$36,000 in travel expenses for trips he was not authorized to take, Acting U.S. Attorney Channing Phillips announced today.

Gibbons, a resident of Crofton, MD., entered his guilty plea today before the Honorable John Facciola in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. When Gibbons is sentenced later this year before the Honorable Ellen Huvelle, he faces up to 10 years of imprisonment. As part of his plea agreement, Gibbons agreed to make full restitution to the American Red Cross.

According to the government's evidence, Gibbons was employed by the Red Cross at its headquarters, located at 2025 E Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., from January 2006 until April 2008, when he was confronted, resigned, and was escorted from the building. He worked on the staff of the National Chair of Volunteers, and later for the Senior Vice President of Chapter Operations. The Red Cross is an organization which receives in excess of \$10,000 per year in federal financial assistance.

Beginning in June 2006, Gibbons took a large number of trips that were, in whole or in part, not approved in advance (nor ratified afterward), not Red Cross work-related, and of no benefit to the Red Cross, yet paid for by the Red Cross due to Gibbons' fraud. Gibbons' fraudulent scheme was to submit false travel vouchers (stating a work purpose when there was none, or adding a personal portion or inflated expenses to an authorized trip), forge his supervisor's signature, and thereby obtain reimbursement for travel expenses when the Red Cross did not owe him any reimbursement or at least not the full amount submitted. As part of the scheme, he used the Red Cross central billing system to obtain airline tickets for unauthorized trips, and on seven occasions he went so far as to obtain airline tickets for members of his family. In all, Gibbons obtained fraudulent reimbursement checks for 21 trips, as well as fraudulent airline tickets for himself or family, worth a total of \$36,495.36.

On April 18, 2008, when questioned by his supervisor about his most recent voucher, Gibbons admitted that the voucher contained expenses that were not related to his job. He resigned that day. On August 25, 2008, when questioned by the U.S. Secret Service, Gibbons admitted that he “submitted false travel vouchers for expenses that did not occur,” and that when he submitted these vouchers he “knew that these travels and expenses were not authorized by the Red Cross.”

In announcing today’s guilty plea, Acting U.S. Attorney Phillips praised the hard work of the investigative agents involved in this matter, Special Agents Justin Camp and Daniel Rau of the United States Secret Service. He also acknowledged the efforts of Legal Assistant Lisa Robinson, as well as Assistant U.S. Attorney Daniel Friedman, who is handling this prosecution.

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